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ABSTRACT

Activities, patterns and approaches for using ropes in physical education are discussed, and emphasis is placed on varying the activities in order to focus on quantity of movement for fitness purposes, quality of movement for perfection of patterns, and personal interaction and working together for social goals. The objective is to provide ways that ropes can be used in physical education and recreation programs for fitness, motor development, and fun. (DS)

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ROPE ACTIVITIES FOR FUN, FITNESS, AND FONICS

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ROPE ACTIVITIES FOR FUN, FITNESS, AND FONICS

Rope--old or new, short or long, small or large, strong or weak, straight or curved--can be used in various ways to provide stimulating and challenging activities for boys and girls, men and women of all ages and abilities. Individuals with different handicapping conditions can participate in and enjoy most of the same rope activities and personal challenges as their nonhandicapped classmates. Individuals on crutches, persons with braces, and those in wheelchairs need not be left out as each can participate in his or her own way. Rope activities can be done individually, in pairs or small groups, and in large gatherings. They can be vigorous or not too strenuous; done with lots of space or in very confined areas; tasks can be easy and simple or difficult and demanding. Rope activities provide opportunities for everyone to participate together while responding to individual challenges. Rope activities provide excellent opportunities to satisfy demands of individualized education programs in least restrictive environments through a medium that is appealing, well received, and fun. The only limitations in using rope activities are those imposed by lack of immagination exhibited by teachers/leaders and participants. So, hitch your rope to a star and swing to who knows where.

Ropes

Ropes can be obtained from a variety of sources--

- Commercially made ropes for jumping, turning, twisting, climbing, tugging, and using in exploratory and problem-solving activities.
- Made from three-eights inch clothesline, sash cord, and other easily obtained and inexpensive sources.
- Commercially available ropes made from plastic and other synthetic materials that are elastic or nonelastic depending upon proposed uses; they can be used in straight lines, circles, and in a variety of shapes and patterns.

Obviously, ropes come in a wide range of materials and colors--

- Individual jump or short ropes should be from six to nine feet long depending upon the user's height. A rule of thumb is to have ends of the rope just long enough to reach the shoulders while the individual stands on the middle of the rope.
- Long ropes for group jumping should be heavier than individual ropes and can range from ten to twenty feet in length.
- Circle ropes can be made from clothesline, sash cord, or other easily obtained ropes. Although commercially made circle ropes can be obtained, caution should be exercised in using them for this purpose for safety reasons; i.e., overstretching the rope, letting go of the catch, being hit by recoiling rope.

Long ropes can be used in straight lines as well as placed in circles and in various shapes and patterns for many different kinds of vigorous and interesting activities. When long ropes are used for jumping and leaping activities in particular, elastic rather than firm ropes are recommended for safety reasons--if an individual trips or gets a foot hung, the rope will give making it less likely that a participant will trip and fall.

Activities, patterns, and approaches that follow are among the infinite number of ways ropes can be used in physical education and recreation programs for fitness, motor development, and fun. By changing emphasis, the same activity can be used for different purposes--focus on quantity of movement for fitness purposes, quality of movement for perfection of patterns, and personal interaction and working together for social goals. Music provides an excellent background for many rope activities. This accompaniment can be from special records, current favorites of the group or individual participants, piano, banjo, guitar, accordian, harmonica, auto harp, recorder, or rhythm band. Music can be taped on reels or casettes in advance to free the teacher/leader and other staff personnel for working directly with activity participants.

Sample Rope Activities

With the rope on the ground in a straight line, have youngsters--

- Walk forward (backward, sideward) along the rope (keep feet on either side of the rope).
- Jump (hop) forward (backward, sideward) along (over) the rope.
- Do a standing (running) jump over the rope (hold it at different heights).
- Stand astride the rope, jump and click heels (once, twice) while above the rope.

With the rope on the ground in a circle, have youngsters--

- Run, jump, and land in the circle in a crouch (standing) position; follow with various stunts while in the circle and jump out of the circle in different ways (standing long jump, frog jump).
- Jump in and out of the circle (forward, backward, sideways).
- Jump and click the heels (once, twice) while above the circle; start either standing astride or in the circle.
- Walk forward (backward, sideways) around the circle.
- Do a cartwheel over the circle.

NOTE: See pages 4 to 7 for additional BASIC INDIVIDUAL ROPE ACTIVITIES.

Basic Individual Rope Activities

Individual jump ropes or six to nine foot sections of clothes line or sash cord are all needed to introduce basic individual rope activities.

. Place rope in a straight line on the floor and--

--Walk along the rope with one foot on either side of the rope.
--Walk on the rope using the same patterns as done on a balance beam (forward, backward, sideward, knee to heel, bounce a ball, step over objects, duck under objects, keep a bean bag on top of the head, carry weighted objects, keep eyes closed).
--Face the rope and jump (hop) over it forward (backward).
--Run, (jump, hop, gallop, skip, leap) back and forth along (around) the rope.
--Stand with feet together on one side of the rope, jump sideward over the rope, jump back over the rope, continue down the rope and back in this alternate manner.
--Hop back and forth over the rope in the same patterns described for the jump above.
--Use various animal walks (crab, spider, lame dog, seal, walrus, inch-worm, bear, elephant) to move back and forth along (around) the rope.
--Use various imaginative ways (airplane, train, dragon, giants, midgets) to move back and forth along (around) the rope.
--Balance with body parts in different combinations (one foot, foot and hand, head and feet) and numbers (one, two, three, six parts) on the rope (on either side of the rope).
--Provide opportunities for students to be creative as they explore and solve movement problems over (around) the single straight rope.
--Increase difficulty and challenge by raising the rope for activities where appropriate.

. Place rope in the shape of a circle on the floor and--

--Do all activities for single straight ropes discussed above.
--Jump (hop) in and out of the circle in as many different ways as possible (forward, backward, sideward, one foot, straddle, heels, tip toes).
--Get all the way inside the circle and then move around in the circle.
--Put body parts in different combinations and numbers in and outside of the circle.

. Place the rope in various shapes (triangle, square, rectangle, pentagon, diamond) as numbers, letters, or in creative combinations and have students perform movements and patterns as discussed above.

. Have students made creative patterns with the rope and then reproduce these patterns with their bodies.

. Reverse the procedure above--make a pattern with the body and then reproduce this pattern with the rope.

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. Use the body and rope together to form specified shapes, letters, numbers, other patterns, or creative shapes.

. Work with a partner using one or two ropes and bodies of each participant to form specified shapes, letters, numbers, other patterns, or creative shapes.

Circle Rope Activities

Have members of the class space themselves evenly around a circle rope. Twenty-five or fifty foot sections of clothes line work well depending upon the size of the class. Rope loops can be tied into the main circle rope as hand holds to assure even spacing around the rope. Some teachers have reported success in circle rope activities with hyperactive and distractible children having short attention spans by looping the rope around the waists of these children. Nonelastic materials are preferred for types of circle rope activities presented for safety reasons. Representative of endless activities that can be introduced with circle ropes follow.

. Stand in place with feet shoulder width apart (together, astride) and--

--Pull back on the rope at waist (thigh, knee, shin, foot, stomach, chest, shoulder, chin, nose, eye) level, have palms up (down, one up and one down).
--Push the rope forward (backward, up, down) from each of the levels listed above.
--Pass the rope this (right) way, that (left) way, fast (faster, slow, slower) at each of the levels listed above.
--Move the rope back and forth like pumping a bicycle.
--Push the rope forward with one hand and pull it back with the other; reverse hands and arms, continuing to alternate in this manner (slowly, faster, still faster, even faster).
--Hold the rope at different levels with hands various distances apart and try to move hands together (push hands apart).
--Hold rope at thigh level with palms facing toward (away from) center of circle and bend one (right), then the other (left) arm until arm is fully flexed; return to the starting position, continuing in this alternate manner. Perform with both hands/arms simultaneously.

. Turn around so the rope is behind participants; maintain grasp on rope with both hands, and--

--Run (fast, faster, knees high).
--Perform selected and appropriate activities from listing above.

. Lift the rope up, take one step to the inside, bring the rope down to belt or waist level, and--

--Push back against the rope hard.
--Walk (run) backwards against the rope; increase (decrease) force against rope and the speed of the run.
--Turn around so the back is toward the center of the circle and walk (run) slowly (fast, faster).
--Have participants alternate so that one faces the center and the next has his/her back to the center and repeat activities listed above.

. Sit down on the floor, place the rope over the feet and supported on the insteps; extend the knees, lie back, and--

--Sit up, grab the rope, and stretch the legs; lie back, continuing in this alternate manner for a given number of repetitions (length of time, music sequence).
--Sit up, grab the rope, pull hard, and don't let yourself slide along the floor (the more slippery the floor, the more difficult this is to accomplish).
--Sit up, grab the rope, pull hard, and let the body slide quickly (slowly) under the rope--FUN!!!
--Raise the legs and keep the rope supported a few inches off the floor; raise the rope gradually higher, returning it to the floor in a coordinated way.
--Place the rope over one ankle and under the other heel so that the rope can be raised as high as possible with the one foot while being held down as far as possible with the heel; reverse and raise with the other foot; use time or music sequences to control the length of time for this activity.
--Hold the rope on the soles of the feet and move them in a bicycling motion, starting with the legs close to the floor, leaning on the elbows, and gradually moving the legs upward to a traditional bicycle position.

. Lie on the stomach, head toward the center of the cirlce, extend the arms fully, grasp the rope with the hands and--

--Raise one (left), other (right), both arms as high as possible; keep the chin, toes, and knees in contact with the floor.
--Raise one (left), other (right), both legs as high as possible; keep the chin in contact with the floor; do initially with the knees, also maintaining contact with the floor, then with the knees not in contact with the floor (make sure the legs are straight throughout the pattern at this level).
--Raise one (left), other (right), both legs as high as possible; keep the hands and arms in contact with the floor; get the head and chin as high up into the air as possible.
--Raise one (left), other (right), both legs, one (left), other (right), both hands and arms, and the head and chin as high into the air as possible.

. Stand beside the rope, hold it with one (left, right) hand and--

--Walk (slowly, quickly, fast, faster, backwards, loudly, quietly, knees high, knees low; on toes, tip toes, heels, one heel and one toe, outsides of the feet, insides of the feet, one outside and one inside of the feet; scissors steps, giant steps, baby steps; as the music dictates.
--Run (vary in similar ways as listed above).
--Jump (forward, backward, variations as listed above).
--Hop (one foot, other foot, even patterns/uneven patterns, similar ways as above).
--Gallop (put one foot forward, keep it there, now move forward, backward, change lead foot, change speeds).
--Skip (forward, backward, slow, fast).
--Leap (high, low, long, short).
--Perform movements suggested by music (swing, sway).

. Hold the rope with both hands and--

--Do locomotor movements into and out of the center of the circle.
--Introduce basic square dance movements such as circle right/left, all to the center and back, ladies/gents to the center, star formations, and variations of do-si-do, allemande and grand right and left.
--Introduce circle and folk dances such as Hokey Pokey, Bunny Hop, Seven Jumps, Virginia Reel, La Raspa, and Hora.
--Perform original physical fitness movements, activities, and sequences as well as those in patterns such as Chicken Fat.

. Provide opportunities for students to respond in original and innovative ways through exploratory and problem solving techniques.

Long Rope Activities

Have two individuals hold opposite ends of a long rope that is extended across the middle of a room, gymnasium, hard top area, or indoor or outdoor open space. It is possible to attach one end of a long rope to a chair, table, or other stable object while the opposite end is held by an aide, another teacher, a parent, or a student. Have class members go to one end of the room so that they can face the middle of the room and the rope.

In small settings, class members can be divided so that half is at each end of the space being used. When this pattern is used, students on one side perform the designated activity, movement, or pattern at the rope, continue across the area, and then perform a specified activity with a specific partner or someone on the other side of the area. For example, partners could salute, bow or courtsey, shake hands, do one/two hand/arm/elbow swing, perform do-si-do right/left, touch certain body parts, churn the butter, leap frog, do a combative activity, follow the leader, add-on, or perform creative movements before returning or having the other person go back to the other side; the original activity, movement or pattern is performed at the rope on the return activity.

Another possibility in these situations is to have the first performer take the second one back to the other side in various ways--crawl, creep, walk, run, jump, hop, gallop, skip, leap together; carry piggyback, saddle back, in arms; wheelbarrow. When the partners reach the other side, then the second student--the visitor--returns to his/her starting side while performing the basic activity, movement, or pattern at the rope.

Activities can be made increasingly difficult by gradually raising or lowering the rope for students to go over or under it. Additional challenges and fun can be introduced by gently shaking the rope from side-to-side or in up and down motions so that the rope may be given the appearance of a wiggling snake. Individual differences can be met by angling the rope so that one end is wider or higher than the other, much in the same way done in games like Jump the Creek. An elastic or stretch rope is recommended for these activities for safety reasons. Elastic ropes give if a student catches a foot or trips so that falls are less likely than in situations where a nonelastic rope is used. Representative of the countless number and type of activities and personal challenges that can be introduced with long ropes follow.

. Hold the rope across an area, have students run and go over the rope, taking off and landing in the following ways--

--Step over the rope with regular (big, small, giant, baby, scissors, bold, timid) steps.
--Take off both fee and land on both (one, then the other, right, left) feet (foot).
--Take off one (right,left) foot and land on the same (opposite, other, right,/left, left/right) foot.
--Perform each of the activities described above executing a quarter (half, three-quarter, full) turn before landing.
--Have partners (groups of three, four) perform activities, movements, patterns as coordinated groups.

. Hold the rope across an area, have students go under the rope in the following ways--

--Crawl (creep) slowly (slower, still slower, fast, faster, still faster).
-Do animal walks (crab, spider, seal, walrus).
--Lead with the head (arm, hand, elbow, chest, stomach, back, buttocks, side, knee, leg, foot, chin, ear).
--Go under the rope forward (backward, sideward).
--Go under the rope with back (chest, stomach, side) toward the ceiling.
--Combine movements from the above listings, such as move forward on all fours with the back toward the ceiling.
--Roll under the rope (roll still a different way, still another way).
--Pretend you are a bear (worm, kangaroo, row boat, swimmer) and go under the rope.
--Go under the rope in ways suggested by the music.

. Double the rope so that one person holds the two ends and another person holds the rope near the middle so that two rope lines are parallel to each other and the floor and then have students--

--Go over (under) both ropes in ways listed above for single long rope activities.
--Use patterns listed above to go over one rope, land between the ropes, and then go over the other rope.
--Use patterns listed above to go over one rope and under the next rope.
--Have one rope high and the other low so that students go under (over) the high side and over (under) the low side.

. Stand with both feet between the ropes and--

--Jump over one rope to one side, return to the middle, and continue in this manner.
--Jump so that one foot lands outside of each rope.
--Jump from both feet and land on outside (inside) foot over left (right) rope.
--Jump and do a half (full) turn landing between (outside) both ropes.
--Do activities with music, such as a march with a good solid beat.

. Stand with one side next to one of the rope lines when they are held in the double pattern as above and--

--Jump sideward so as to land between the ropes, and jump back to starting point (over the other rope).
--Hop on one (right, left) foot over ropes in the same pattern as described for the jump above.
--Hop so as to land on inside foot after clearing nearer rope, change to the other foot in the middle, hop over the other rope landing on the other foot, return over the ropes in the same pattern, and continue in same alternate pattern which is both left, right change to left, left change to right, right.
--Do with music for Tinikling, Philipine Stick Dance, or Bamboo Hop.

Double the rope so that one person holds both ends and another persons holds the rope near the middle so that the two ropes are parallel to each other and perpendicular to the floor to form a window and--

--Go through the window in the same ways as discussed for going over single ropes.
--Lead with the hands and arms (reach closer and closer to the floor until a forward roll results).

Story Activities

Use ropes for props in dramatic stories, so that students can take part in either structured or creative movement activities. For example--

. Mount your horse and ride away from camp (use rope as bridle for the horse, a whip, lasso, or the horse itself).

. Tie the horse to a tree.

. Get in a canoe and row across the river (use rope for oars, the boat itself).

. Bring the boat out of the water on the other side of the river and tie it to a tree.

. Hike toward the mountain, swing the rope overhead (at the side as a lasso, in big/small circles) and/or bring it down against the ground with much (little) force.

. Look up into the sky and watch eagles flying (use the rope as wings and fly).

. Place the rope in the shape of a mountain and walk (crawl, creep, run, jump, hop, gallop, skip, leap, spider walk, crab walk, bear walk, lame dog walk) around the mountain.

--Jump (hop) over the mountain in different ways and patterns (forward backward, sideward, high, low).
--Jump (hop) in and out of the mountain in different ways and patterns and combinations.

--Place one hand in the middle of the mountain and do a coffee grinder around the mountain.
--Wheelbarrow a partner around the mountain.
--Do an Indian Dance with both feet in (one foot in and one foo. outside) the mountain.

- Continue on your hike up the mountain, spot buffalo, sneak-up and use bow and arrow to shoot at buffalo (use rope as bow and/or arrow).

- Continue the story in your own ways.

- Make up your own stories related to student interests, experiences, and portions of the country.

Special Rope Activities

Special and novelty approaches can add even more challenge and fun to activities. These approaches and activities should be selected according to particular needs and specific interests of the children. Creative innovation and resourcefulness are keys to appealing rope activities of this type.

- Rope Twirl. Attach two tennis balls by a string to a climbing rope--trying to maneuver it so that the two balls hit each other; individual and group competition can be included.

- Marching Rope. Tie loops two to four feet apart on a long rope for spacing in a straight line or circle--use as an aid in teaching laterality, directionality, and spacing concepts.

- Creative Rope Design. Encourage children to make various designs with their rope--use to change the pace and tempo of activities and to reinforce with various classroom activities.

- Four-Way Pull. Tie two ropes together and place them perpendicular to each other; have an individual grasp each rope end and have a four-way tug-o-war--use longer ropes and make this into a group or team activity by dividing the class into fours. Modify by having bowling pins, Indian Clubs, tin cans, plastic bottles, or other objects for each individual to knock or kick down; objects should be out of the normal reach span of each individual.

- Jump the Shot. Have youngsters stand in a circle--teacher/leader/IT swings rope and each child jumps the rope as it passes him/her. The rope can be weighted with a shoe, towels, socks, or a ball. Use a large tin can top or object that makes a noise as it contacts the ground so blind and partially sighted children can take part. Add further challenge and fun by suddenly changing the speed at which the rope is twirled. Teacher/leader/IT may also sit or lie on the floor to swing the rope. Some call this TORPEDO.

. Duck the Shot. Have youngsters stand in a circle--teacher/leader IT swings rope and each child ducks rope as it passes over him/her.

. Jump Rope Relay. Divide group into even teams; give the first player on each team a jump rope--at a given signal the first players start jumping and singing the rhyme; when each finishes he/she gives the rope to the next person on the team. If a person misses he/she must start the chant all over again. The first team to have all its members finish jumping wins. The rhyme is as follows:

Apartment for rent,
Inquire within,
When I move out
Let _____ move in. (use name of next person in line to fill in the blank).